Photos by Margaret Thomas—The Washington Post

Speakers at a "crusade against moral pollution" aimed primarily at television programs are, from left: Helen Delich Bentley, chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission; actress Ilona Massey; Martha Rountree, president and co-founder of the Leadership Foundation, which sponsored the event; Mrs. George Romney and Mrs. Ted Dienert.

Post 12/7/72

A Cleanup Crusade For TV

By Alan M. Kriegsman

"This will be remembered as the day women came together to restore the moral climate of the nation." Thus said Martha Rountree, President and co-founder of the Leadership Foundation, which launched a nationwide "crusade against moral pollution" yesterday at a luncheon in the Shoreham Hotel.

About 500 persons from across the country, predominantly middle-aged women, attended the event, billed as a major effort to "clean up" television programs.

The luncheon was to be only an "initial step" in a capaign to "get our great nation back on the right track —morally, socially and spiritually," according to keynote speaker Helen Delich Bentley, chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission.

Prime targets of the speakers were the smut, crime and violence allegedly flooding current television programming, but the indictments extended as well to such other areas as drug abuse, alcoholism, "coddling" of criminals, student riots, sex education in the schools and welfare programs.

By far the most outspoken and avidly applauded panelist was screen actress Ilona Massey. The Hungarian-born performer (an American citizen since 1946), featured in such pictures as "The Plunderers," "Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man" and "Love Happy," was particularly vehement about "soft" treatment of convicts, praising the efficacy of chain gangs and calling for the restoration of capital punishment.

Welfare was also a particular object of her scorn. "Able-bodied men and women are bleeding our nation to death," she asserted. "Why? Because we let them. They do not want to work—why should they? Because you and your husband are supporting them."

Miss Massey said that unless present trends are reversed, she sees the country "headeed for a great disaster." In addition to recommending stricter law enforcement and welfare reform, she also lashed out against the teaching of sex facts in schools. "I beg to differ with Dr. Spook (sic)," she remarked. "Our schools must bring back God. Patriotism should be taaught instead of sex. Let's all work

See CLEANUP, L10, Col. 1

A Cleanup Crusade for TV

CLEANUP, From L1

together to create a healthier nation, with God's help."

Many of the same themes were sounded in Mrs. Bentley's keynote speech, albeit in somewhat milder terms. Television's "predilection for violence" was scored, as well as the "inordinate amount of time given to dissenters, protesters and ne'er-do-well radicals."

Mrs. Bentley suggested that television could be used to better our way of life, to lift moral standards and to upgrade education. "Why not use television as the tool to help restore morality, patriotism, pride of individual and of country?" she asked. "In a word—TV can be literally used to sell America! It's really a superb product!"

Other speakers followed these refrains in various ways. Mrs. George Romney said that if womens' liberation meant being liberated from concern with family and children, then "America's down the drain," and she warned also against "liberal youth" who would "destroy civilization, because they would do anything rather than appear conservative."

Mrs. Willian Bright, co-organizer of last May's "Campus Crusade" in Dallas noted a "rising tide of prayer" among women today and said that a White House briefing of 43 women yesterday morning emphasized "the stability of the American home' as the key to the solution of the nation's problems.

Mrs. Ruth E. Hankins, vice president of the D.C. Women's Bar Association and the one black person among the 20 or so on the dais, declared that it is up to parents to teach children "what is good, warm and decent," and so counteract the smut and brutality they see on televsion.

"We cannot legislate goodness, morality or love," noted Mrs. Ted Dienert, 21-year old daughter of Billy Graham. "It must be born in the heart by one's personal relationship to God and His Son."

Both the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Jesse L. Steinfeld, and acting chairman of the FCC, Commissioner Robert Lee, were on hand to express support for the campaign, and to suggest measures a concerned citizen could take to influence the content of the media. Mrs. Pat Boone also spoke briefly.

Among the courses of action indicated by Commissioner Lee and other speakers were letters of protest to local television stations, the FCC, and program sponsors; boycott of products advertised on offensive shows; door-to-door canvass of neighborhoods to enlist support; and submission of objections to the renewal of licenses for TV stations which fail to uphold "decent" standards.

The sponsoring organization for the crusade, the tax-exempt, non-profit Leadership Foundation (headquartered in Washington, D.C.) has plans to implement its appeal across the country. The foundation hopes to set up local groups to monitor TV programs for objectionable material, to instruct members and friends to file complaints and to threaten sponsors with boycott if they continue to support such programs.

Luncheon guests included sympathetic representatives from such other religious, parental, educational and community groups as "Parents Who Care," "Back to God Movement," "The Legion of Mary," "National Religious Broadcasters," "National Extension Homemakers Council," and "Accuracy in Media."

The event had all the trappings of a service club luncheon. The U.S Navy Band played while guests found their tables. An Army chaplain presided over the invocation and one of the women from the Leadership Foundation board led the crowd in the pledge of allegiance.

Toward the end of the luncheon, guests were led in the singing of a specially composed ditty, "A Simple Formula," by Hank Fort, with text beginning, "Good makes good, bad makes bad, happy makes happy, and sad makes sad." Door prizes: Free dinners at the Jockey Club, free flowers, and so forth, were awarded to half a dozen or so lucky ticket holders.